

expression for Cubans, and instructs its thugs to assault the members of the peaceful opposition for the "crime" of seeking freedom, democracy and respect for human rights in Cuba. The world needs to respond in the strongest possible terms to this latest violation of the most elemental human rights in Cuba. This resolution condemns the latest violations of human rights by the Cuban regime, a regime of gangsters, by gangsters and for gangsters, led by a gangster in chief.

HONORING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 26, 2005

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening not only to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, known as the ADA, but also to acknowledge my unwavering support of the ADA and of people with disabilities.

This Act has created positive changes, large and small, for disabled people everywhere. The access ramps we see leading into buildings are examples. Water fountains and sinks are more accessible. Services for the sight- and the hearing-impaired are more common. Employment discrimination is decreasing.

Another important development is that the Americans with Disabilities Act has mobilized the disabilities advocacy community. Since 1990, people with disabilities have grown into seasoned advocates. They have unified their voices and are being heard from the halls of Congress to the every city and town across America. Unity has added strength to their voice and confidence to their actions. And they are being heard, loud and clear. Every year, Congress has considered legislation affecting people with disabilities, whether it be concerning Social Security benefits, education, tax provisions, labor standards, or other issues. The Americans with Disabilities Act provided a comprehensive legislative starting point—but there is still so much more to be done.

Perhaps more than anything else, this legislation has given hope to disabled people here in Dallas and across this nation. The Americans with Disabilities Act affirmed that people with disabilities should have as many opportunities to succeed in life as any other citizen. Its message is one of equality. To the 14,589 disabled workers in Texas' 30th District, and others across the nation, the message is: "You belong."

HONORING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

HON. JIM RAMSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 26, 2005

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 15th anniversary of landmark civil rights legislation for Americans with disabilities—the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

This landmark law was passed with strong bipartisan support and signed into law by President George H.W. Bush. As we mark the 15th anniversary of this historic event, we celebrate the tremendous progress and new doors that have been opened to individuals with disabilities as a result of the ADA.

The purpose of the ADA was to provide clear and comprehensive national standards to eliminate discrimination against individuals with disabilities. As a result, individuals with disabilities are now able to live in their homes and have access to new careers. Accessible busses and trains and better paratransit systems have made it possible for more people with disabilities to get to work and school, enjoy restaurants and theaters and travel.

The ADA has improved society, not only for the 14 percent of Americans over the age of five who have at least one disability. Common-sense accommodations like curb cuts and close captioning have also benefited Americans without disabilities.

On this important anniversary, we must remember that while we have come a long way in eliminating barriers, critical work remains to ensure all Americans can live up to their full potential. Tragically, we still have stereotypes and misconceptions that affect people with disabilities. Sadly, we still have examples like the boy in Pennsylvania who was the target of discrimination by his T-ball coach. This is not an isolated incident, as I have learned of another boy in Kansas who was denied the right to play T-ball like any other 7-year-old because he had cerebral palsy. Fortunately, because of the ADA, that boy was eventually allowed to play T-ball.

Giving people with disabilities the right to participate fully in society is what this landmark legislation is all about.

As co-chair of the Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus, I know that the ADA is a major achievement and much has been accomplished over the last 15 years. As we celebrate how far we've come, let us also recommit to creating a society in which no barrier stands in the way of fully participating in our society.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 26, 2005

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to participate in the following votes on July 22, 2005. If I had been present, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall vote 415, on agreeing to the Velázquez of New York amendment No.4 to H.R. 3070—the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act, I would have voted "no."

Rollcall vote 416, on passage of H.R. 3070—the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act, I would have voted "aye."

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE ALPHONSO CHRISTIAN

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 26, 2005

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, the United States Virgin Islands has lost one of its outstanding success stories as prominent lawyer and Judge Alphonso Christian passed away Saturday, July 23, 2005.

With the passing of this Native son we have lost a premiere trail blazer. This outstanding Virgin Islander, born in Frederiksted, St. Croix, made substantial contributions to the Territory and in particular to the island of St. Thomas, the place he sailed to as a young man to begin his career. St. Thomas became his home, and it is where he began a flourishing and illustrious career, raising his children to be another generation of a progressive Family that is especially renowned in St. Croix for its industriousness, hard work and diligence.

Christian, 88, died of heart failure at Roy L. Schneider Hospital on St. Thomas. A jurist, attorney, government administrator, teacher and community activist, Christian had arisen from humble beginnings on St. Croix. Christian was born on August 2, 1916 to Peter and Wilhelmina Christian in Frederiksted. His well disciplined upbringing and strong will to succeed during his child hood set the tone for his achievements to come.

He graduated as the Valedictorian of the Commercial Class at St. Patrick's and started as Clerk Typist at the Agricultural Station at Anna's Hope. He later came to St. Thomas where his speed and accuracy in this position paved the way for his becoming the Stenographer to Mr. Herbert Lockhart of the A.H. Lockhart & Co., a company that was the hub of all commercial activity on St. Thomas.

He worked his way from stenographer to reporter, and served as secretary of the Virgin Islands Municipal Council, and all the while studied law by correspondence from the well known LaSalle School. Impressed by his legal intellect, although he had never practiced law, Christian was allowed to take the bar exam without having attended law school. He passed at his first attempt with high marks and was admitted to the V.I. Bar in 1949.

Christian became involved with civic and political organizations while studying law by correspondence with the well-known LaSalle School.

His activity in politics began with his involvement in the first political party, the V.I. Progressive Guide. That position was the springboard to other positions such as Executive Secretary to the Municipal Council and the Legislative Assembly.

He was named legal aide to the Municipal Council of St. Thomas and St. John and the Legislative Assembly in 1949 and Judge of the Police Court in 1951. For the three years he served as Judge of the police Court, he also served as Coroner Recorder of Deeds, Chairman of the Board of Elections, United States Commissioner and Chairman of the Fourth of July Celebrations.

In 1972, he was appointed Commissioner of Public Safety of the Virgin Islands and served in the position until 1975, when he practiced law full-time. In April 1978, he was named the first Senior Sitting Judge of the Territorial

Court of the Virgin Islands, now known as the Superior Court, and served until April 1993.

Judge Alphonso Christian has served the Territory as a businessman, teacher, Attorney, Commissioner, Jurist, community activist and philanthropist. Judge Christian started his own business by opening and teaching at his own Commercial School, which he began in his living room and later transferred to his law office.

He was also the Commissioner of Public Safety at the time when that Department also included the Fire Service and the Prison System. His extensive community involvement also included being a Charter Member of the Lions Club, Chairman of the Virgin Islands Carnival Committee for several years, serving on various community Boards, and using his legal experience and business acumen to help the Catholic Church in many areas. While serving in these many capacities, Christian also taught legal assistants at the University of the Virgin Islands.

A man of many talents and blessed with wisdom, knowledge and persistence, Alphonso Christian will be long remembered and praised for his work in all areas in which he served his beloved home, but I am certain that he counts among his greatest contributions, as do we, those which have been made and will continue to be made through his children and grandchildren.

Judge Alphonso and my father Judge Almeric Christian who preceded him in death by several years were respected colleagues and good friends. On behalf of my family, staff, and the Members of the 109th Congress of the United States of America, I extend my heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Ruth Christian, their children, Rubina, Delano, Alicia, including my dear friends Attorney Alphonso, Jr., and Dr. Cora Christian, grandchildren, sister Ann Abramson, family and friends.

May God comfort and bless you during this time of loss and may you find peace and acceptance in knowing that Judge Christian left an admirable record of achievement and a stellar example for those of us to emulate when we want to reach for the stars and the world tells us we have nothing to stand on.

His faith, persistence and hard work overcame great obstacles, and now he rests in God's eternal peace.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE CENTENNIAL OF SUSTAINED IMMIGRATION FROM THE PHILIPPINES TO THE UNITED STATES

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 26, 2005

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce, together with 29 of my colleagues, a concurrent resolution to formally recognize the 2006 centennial of sustained Filipino immigration to the United States, acknowledge the many achievements of our Filipino-American community, and reflect on the productive and enduring relationship between the United States and the Philippines over the past century.

The Filipino-American experience and the evolving yet always close relationship between the Philippines and the United States began in earnest in 1906, when fifteen Filipino contract laborers arrived in the then-Territory of Hawaii to work on the islands' sugar plantations. This marked the start of an emigration from the Philippines to the United States which, during the subsequent century, has numbered upwards of 60,000 a year, making Filipinos our second-largest immigrant group from the Asia-Pacific region.

The year 1906 was also when the first class of two hundred "pensionados" arrived from the Philippines to obtain a United States education with the intent of returning to the Philippines. Many, however, stayed to become American citizens, forming, with the "sakadas" who emigrated to my Hawaii, the foundation of today's Filipino-American community.

The story of America's Filipino-American community is little known and rarely told. Yet it is the quintessential immigrant story of early struggle, pain, sacrifice, and broken dreams, leading eventually to success in overcoming ethnic, social, economic, political, and legal barriers to win a well-deserved place in American society.

Today, 2.4 million Americans of Filipino ancestry live throughout our Nation, including the

two top states: California, where 1.1 million reside, and Hawaii, my home state, where some 275,000 live (140,000 in my Second Congressional District alone, making it home to the largest number of Filipino Americans of any congressional district).

Members of this community have made great contributions to America, and have achieved success and distinction in, among other things, labor, business, politics, media and the arts, medicine, and the armed forces. Filipino Americans have also served with distinction in the armed forces of the United States throughout the long U.S.-Philippines relationship, from World Wars I and II through the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and today in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere.

Many Filipino Americans retained their mother country's proud cultural traditions, which continue to enrich the diverse tapestry of today's American experience. Many have also maintained close ties to family and friends in the Philippines, and therefore played an indispensable role in maintaining the strength and vitality of the U.S.-Philippines relationship.

That relationship has evolved over the past century from the 1898–1946 period of U.S. governance, during which the then-Commonwealth of the Philippines was represented in the U.S. Congress by thirteen resident commissioners, to the post-independence period beginning in 1946, when the Philippines took its place among the community of nations and became one of this country's most reliable allies in the international arena.

In 2006, our Filipino-American community will join all Americans in pausing to recognize a century of achievement in the United States through a series of nationwide celebrations and memorials marking the centennial of sustained immigration from the Philippines. This centennial will provide every American of whatever ethnic heritage an opportunity to not only celebrate a century of Filipino immigration to the United States, but to celebrate, appreciate, and honor the struggles and triumphs common to the immigrant experience, which, of course, is also the American experience.